

Message Text

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ORIGIN ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 PM-05 SS-15 SSO-00
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DRAFTED BY ARA/CEN:DCJOHNSON:D/HA:OJONES
APPROVED BY ARA:WPSTEDMAN
PM:RTITUS
P:DTICE
ARA/CEN:WMATTHEWS
ARA:SASHELTON
S/S-O:AWOTTO

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P 052118Z AUG 77 ZFF4
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY
INFO AMEMBASSY LA PAZ PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY
USCINCSO
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMCONSUL BELIZE
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 184483 TOSEC 080139

FOR UNDER SECRETARY HABIB

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, GT, US

SUBJECT: AMMUNITION SALE TO GUATEMALA

LA PAZ AND BUENOS AIRES FOR DERIAN

1. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF CABLE FROM EMBASSY GUATEMALA
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REGARDING THE PENDING GUATEMALAN REQUEST TO PURCHASE 5
MILLION ROUNDS OF SMALL ARMS AMMUNITION:

BEGIN TEXT. FOR UNDER SECRETARY HABIB AND ASSISTANT
SECRETARY TODMAN FROM AMBASSADOR

THERE WAS A GENERAL CONSENSUS IN JUNE THAT WE SHOULD HOLD

OFF ACTION ON GUATEMALA'S REQUEST FOR FIVE MILLION ROUNDS OF 5.56 AMMUNITION WHILE TENSIONS WERE HIGH OVER BELIZE. THIS TENSION HAS NOW SUBSIDED TO THE POINT WHERE I BELIEVE WE CAN GO AHEAD WITH THE SHIPMENT. THE BRITISH HAVE WITHDRAWN TWO OF THEIR SHIPS, AND I GATHER THEY EXPECT TO WITHDRAW MORE OF THEIR REINFORCEMENTS GRADUALLY OVER THE NEAR TERM.

EQUALLY IMPORTANT IS THE FACT THAT PRESIDENT LAUGERUD COOPERATED WITH US FULLY DURING THE PEAK OF THE RECENT CRISIS, REFRAINING AT OUR URGING FROM FURTHER MILITARY

ESCALATION. I BELIEVE IT WILL HELP US PRESERVE OUR INFLUENCE WITH HIM IF WE NOW SHOW OURSELVES TO BE RESPONSIVE TO HIS INTERESTS AS WELL.

WITH THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE PAST THREE WEEKS, I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE IS ANY REAL PROSPECT OF EARLY GUATEMALAN ACTION AGAINST BELIZE. IN ANY CASE, THE DELIVERY OF THIS AMMUNITION WOULD NOT MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A GUATEMALAN DECISION TO MOVE OR NOT TO MOVE.

FOR ALL THESE REASONS AND HAVING IN MIND THE KEEN PERSONAL INTEREST WHICH PRESIDENT LAUGERUD HAS TAKEN IN THE DELIVERY OF THIS AMMUNITION, I STRONGLY URGE THAT YOU AUTHORIZE ME TO INFORM HIM PROMPTLY THAT WE ARE PRO-CONFIDENTIAL

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CEEDING WITH THE SALE. BOSTER END TEXT

2. DEPARTMENT BELIEVES IT WOULD BE USEFUL TO HAVE A DECISION ON THIS CASE EARLIER THAN YOUR RETURN TO WASHINGTON. PM, ARA AND D/HA WASHINGTON AGREE THAT THE AMBASSADOR, ON INFORMING LAUGERUD OF ANY APPROVAL, SHOULD TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

(A) WE APPRECIATE HIS POSITIVE EFFORTS TO DEFUSE TENSION OVER BELIZE AND HOPE THAT HE WILL CONTINUE THEM.

(B) AS HE IS AWARE, HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS ARE ONE OF THE MAJOR ELEMENTS OF OUR ARMS TRANSFER POLICY.

(C) WE RECOGNIZE THAT HIS ADMINISTRATION HAS IMPROVED THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN GUATEMALA, BUT WE ALSO ARE CONCERNED THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION CONTINUES TO ATTRACT CRITICISM.

(D) WE WILL SUPPORT HIS EFFORTS TO CONTINUE TO IMPROVE GUATEMALA'S HUMAN RIGHTS RECORD.

(E) WE VALUE OUR DIALOGUE ON THIS ISSUE AND HOPE IT WILL
CONTINUE.

3. FOR DERIAN: SUGGEST THAT ANY COMMENTS YOU MAY HAVE
BE CABLED DIRECTLY TO HABIB. CHRISTOPHER

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